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ABSTRACT

In the Community in the Classroom project, 10 Appalachian community-based groups are exploring ways in which literacy education can contribute to community development. This project is challenging assumptions about the role of education, looking beyond the traditional economic context of adult education, and shifting the focus of literacy from individual outcomes to social impacts on the community. Literacy programs that would build communities not only teach specific basic skills, but also provide opportunities for students to learn teamwork, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making in a democratic environment. However, developing a community-oriented literacy program is difficult, and even community-based groups may forget lessons learned from their own organizing and think that they must do education as schools do it, by dividing and individualizing students. Barriers to the community approach include the choice of an "expert" teacher over a participatory classroom leader, program standards defined by outside funders, and lack of experience with alternative educational approaches. Community in the Classroom focuses on leadership training for community-based tutors and teachers, design of curriculum that incorporates real community issues, channels for literacy students to contribute to their communities, and organizational networking. Project activities include six workshops for leadership training, special projects developed by each community group, and a process of reflection on program development designed to integrate literacy education with other community empowerment activities. (SV)

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RC020249

Chapter 20
COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM: LITERACY & DEVELOPMENT IN A RURAL INDUSTRIALIZED REGION

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CHANGING TIMES

Education has not necessarily been good for rural communities in the United States of America. Especially in poor rural areas, education has traditionally been the "ticket out" for individuals. If you get educated, the expectation is that you will leave. If you want to stay, education has little direct reward. While this has always been true to some extent, the trend seems to have accelerated in the 1980's when the U.S. Department of Agriculture has documented a substantial "brain drain" from rural communities, as more high-skill production jobs were developed in urban areas.[1]

Educators do not think much about education as the "ticket out," and the resulting decimation of rural communities. Our assumptions have been that education is an intrinsic good, always valuable. In these changing times we need to reassess the value of education and refocus on building communities, not just individuals. We need to create education programs in which people gain the skills and the sense of efficacy to become involved in their community's development.

In our work in Tennessee and in Appalachia, at the Center for Literacy

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Studies we have been coordinating with ten Appalachian community based groups, a project called "Community in the Classroom".[2] Together we are exploring ways in which literacy education can build communities. But it has become clear that to contribute to the building of community, education must not only be in communities and by communities, but also for communities, and educational methodologies and approaches must be different from dominant (traditional) forms. The groups described in "Appalachian Communities: Working to Survive" are firmly rooted in their communities, and yet to varying degrees are trapped in dominant educational methods which make it hard to integrate education with community development. We knew we had to work together to design something new that must be rooted in the particular contexts in which we work. This paper explores some of the contexts of literacy in rural America, especially Appalachia, and describes the goals and some of the experiences of our Community in the Classroom project.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The dominant context for literacy education in the United States in the last decade or more has been the economic one. The ongoing "literacy crisis" in this country has focused primarily on jobs, sometimes expressed as, "if we only had an educated workforce, there would be good jobs for all".

Most rural people know from their own experience that the global economy is changing. During the 1980's, in the United States, jobs in the manufacturing sector declined in numbers, and employment in the service sector increased. Many of the traditional skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing jobs which have been the economic mainstay of much of southern Appalachia and the South are leaving for overseas (even lower wages) or changing (automating, reducing labour force). At the same time, there has been a considerable expansion in the service sector, ranging from low-paid, often temporary or part-time work to high-wage, high-skill occupations.

These changes are not taking place evenly. Urban and rural areas are changing in different ways, and different parts of the same state may also experience very different changes in job structure and opportunities. It is not easy to interpret what all that means for skills demands and education needs.

It is common wisdom that in this changing economic context, workers need higher skills in order to compete internationally. We are offered a choice between *High Skills or Low Wages*![3] The U.S. can become another low wage economy, or can invest in the skills of its workforce and therefore promote productivity growth, the key to a high standard of living. Pessimists note that 70 % of jobs projected for the U.S. by the year 2000 will not require higher education levels. Despite the growth rates in higher-skilled jobs, the greatest numbers of jobs are low wage and low skill.[4]

Education by itself does not create jobs, but many people have assumed that

higher education levels can attract better jobs to a community. This is not necessarily true for rural areas. According to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture report, there is no correlation between education levels in rural areas and economic growth.[5]

Rural areas were especially hard hit by the economic changes of the 1980's. They saw a small growth in numbers of low skill production jobs, and an actual decline in numbers of high education jobs and as a result, many rural areas are experiencing high unemployment levels. In many Appalachian counties, official unemployment rates hover around 20%. Actual unemployment rates are much higher, perhaps up to 60%, when you count those who have been unemployed so long that they have stopped looking for jobs, those whose benefits have expired and those who have dropped off the rolls.

As the gap between rich and poor increases, we may be seeing what John Gaventa of the Highlander Center has called the "Appalachianization" of the United States.(6) Some of the statistics from the 1980's are startling.[7]

- The Congressional Budget Office reports that 70% of the income gains generated in the 1980's accrued to the wealthiest one percent of families.
- The Federal Reserve Board reports that in 1989, that same one percent of families owned 37 % of everything that could be owned in America — as much as was owned by the bottom 90 % of families — and this was up from 31 % in 1983.
- The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 1990, 13.5 % of the workforce worked 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year, and still was unable to earn more than $13,359 — the official poverty line. That is one in seven workers. The rate was up from 11.4 % in 1980.

The role of education in this context has become problematic. While there is some evidence that individuals with higher education do earn more, the translation from education to better pay is not so easy in rural communities. If you live in the coalfields of West Virginia or southwest Virginia, if you live in depressed rural areas of Tennessee and Virginia which have relied on shirt factories and furniture plants, only to see them leave for Mexico, Taiwan and the Philippines — the payoff in better jobs for better education may be possible only if you leave. Education simply enables more individuals to compete for the same limited number of not-very-good jobs.

What happens to our communities when those who get a good education must leave? And what is the role of adult education in supporting other "ends," not just better jobs? We need to look beyond the economic context to culture and community for an adult education that can have a broad impact on our communities and our society. Both of these are changing as much as the economy has changed in the last decade.

Cultural Context

Historically, culture has always been a very important aspect of education in

this country. From instilling the "Protestant work ethic" to "Americanization" programs which were designed to assimilate wave after wave of immigrants, to the Moonlight Schools of Kentucky in the 1920's which were designed to bring Appalachian "hillbillies" into the mainstream, cultural aspects of literacy and education have been and continue to be important. Consistently, cultural aspects of education in this country have been rooted in a melting pot image — an attempt to change who people are, to bring them into "mainstream" culture, to devalue difference.

But times are changing, culturally as well as economically. Globally we have seen increasing, not decreasing, emphasis on diversity and difference and large nations and empires are collapsing into smaller ethnic identities. In this country we see increasing diversity, in which people are demanding to be affirmed and valued racially, ethnically and culturally, rather than diluted and dissipated into a "mainstream." It also means learning to "collaborate" in new ways — to learn to live with, work with and accept people who are not like themselves.

Adult literacy programs are attempting to meet this challenge. Telling our stories is not only a way of respecting and valuing difference, but also of finding common ground. Whatever the vehicle, good adult literacy programs say to participants that they are valued as they are; that who they are and where they came from matters in knowing where they are going; that people who do not read well have skills and experiences to share with others and to contribute to the community of the classroom. This is part of a process of building community in the classroom. Many literacy programs, especially English as a second language (ESL) programs in urban areas are doing quite well on this.

In rural areas of Appalachia, however, there are fewer examples of literacy programs using methods which respect and celebrate the local culture. Even some programs which are firmly rooted in their community may feel that in their education work they must use standard methods and materials, teach people mainstream ways, and minimize rather than celebrate difference.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Needed: An Expanding Focus

In this country, we have long defined literacy in terms of individual skills. We test individual skills, we measure advancement in individual terms, we count numbers and grade level gains. Issues like motivation, recruitment and retention dominate the discussions of adult basic educators.

In other parts of the world, most notably in the Third World, a very different conception of literacy is commonplace — literacy in a social and community role. We do recognize this viewpoint a little when we acknowledge that literacy has

implications beyond individual outcomes, when we link a competitive economy with more literate workers. Literacy from a social perspective focuses on the capacity of individuals to transform themselves and their communities. Progress is measured not in individual skills, but in social impacts.

When Laubach Literacy International U.S. staff evaluate the programs of their partner groups in Africa, Latin America and Asia, for example, they may count the number of water wells drilled for a particular village, or the health clinics started, the income generating projects under way, improvements in infant mortality rates or family nutrition.

These differences in evaluation help us to focus not so much on the skills of literacy, but on its ends. While our primary focus in literacy education in this country has been on enhancing self — and that has been good for many people — we need to expand that to include the enhancement of our communities.

Many community based organizations have been asking, "what skills do we need to fight a toxic waste dump?" or "what skills do we need to operate a food bank?" They might be "what skills do we need to provide preschool or after-school programs for our children?" or "what skills do we need to make better housing, water and sewage systems in our community?" If these are the questions, then the evaluation of our success would be on the basis of reading gains and also on the basis of community actions.

Many community groups create jobs through respecting culture. Ivanhoe, Virginia, for example, is the town that died. When the mines closed, there were no jobs and many people had to leave. In an attempt to create new jobs, the Ivanhoe Civic League was formed to try to recruit industry to a newly formed industrial park. Now, four years later, the Ivanhoe Civic League has not attracted a single new employer to the town. But along the way it has sponsored a community festival each summer to celebrate community and culture. It has published a wonderful community history book. Youth of the community have produced plays using giant puppets, and now are developing a radio station. The Civic League has offered adult basic skills and literacy classes, as well as community college classes taught in the community. It has brought in young people to help renovate houses. And now the largest employer in town ... is the Ivanhoe Civic League.

Groups like these focus on how literacy is used for the community good. What would such programs look like? In some of their aspects, they simply put into practice what have long been regarded as good adult education principles. But the focus on building community takes them further, to bring the context of the community into the classroom, and to make connections for learners between the classroom and the real world of their communities.

Programs whose goals include building communities have some common characteristics in terms of teaching and learning. Such programs would:

- build their curriculum of reading, writing and math around people's real lives and concerns,
- model relationships within the classroom (teacher/student and student/student)

of respect, support and equality;

- provide opportunities for team work, for cooperation and collaboration;
- provide opportunities for people to develop leadership skills, through talking about what leadership is, and enabling students to be leaders in small groups, in the classroom and in the literacy program;
- affirm culture and community through texts and discussions, and through respect and understanding of difference. This does not preclude also teaching skills (including oral language, for example) to be used in dealing with the mainstream — a kind of cultural bilingualism;
- address diversity in our society, and provide opportunities to learn about other cultures and lives in real ways;
- address gender issues in the classroom and in people's lives;
- encourage critical thinking about what people read and hear;
- teach research skills — getting information about issues and concerns in people's lives, from jobs to health, from day care to further educational opportunities;
- prepare people for opportunities existing in the community for acting on problems and concerns by building links with community organizations of all kinds;
- support people wanting to initiate new community efforts, and teach the skills they need to work on these.

Such programs would build communities because they not only teach specific basic skills, but also provide opportunities for students to learn teamwork and cooperation, leadership and problem solving, critical thinking and decision making in a democratic environment. Students and teachers would know more about community needs and community organizations, and develop the sense of efficacy as well as the specific links to act on community issues. But we know that to do literacy in this way is hard, for many different reasons.

Barriers to Literacy for Building Community

Community-oriented literacy may be an enormous challenge to those adult literacy programs which have only concerned themselves with isolated, individual skills. For such programs, building links with the community context may be a logical next step.

But there are certainly barriers to community-oriented literacy, even for community based groups. In their educational work, community groups often forget the lessons they have learned from their own community organizing, and think they have to do education in the same way that schools do it.

One of the greatest barriers is our own and our students' ideas of what education is supposed to look like. If as teachers our definition of education centres on textbooks and workbooks, grade levels and credentials, it may be hard to do literacy in a different way. If as students we want to get our diploma in the shortest possible time, we may be impatient with anything that does not immediately appear to further that goal. Teachers feel pressured to get on with the "lessons," even though they don't have much to do with real life.

Individual vs. Community Relevancy

When community groups want to help people learn how to read, it seems they often replicate the dominant educational system which divides and individualizes instead of creating a community in the classroom which supports people acting on issues they care about in their lives. So programs issue individual workbooks, and congratulate themselves on people starting at their own level and moving at their own pace. They place an adult learner with a tutor, and congratulate themselves on protecting the learner's privacy. They forget that the way we get over shame is to talk about it with others in similar situations, the way we can feel powerful is to act with other people, the way we learn is by talking and acting.

The role of leaders and experts is often another barrier to community-oriented literacy. Community organizing groups often learn that a leader is not necessarily the person who knows the most, or is the most articulate, but may be the one who helps everybody contribute what they can to the effort, helping the group to get stronger. This kind of leader is one who believes and practices participatory decision-making and helps everyone have their say. But when community groups set up their adult basic education classes, they may forget this kind of leader, and look for a teacher who behaves as an "expert" and makes all the decisions about teaching and learning. With this kind of teacher, leadership in the classroom is neither shared nor learned.

When Funders Define the Standards

Another barrier is always resources. As long as adult literacy teachers are either volunteers or part-time and low-paid, with no paid planning time, and few rewards for excellence, we may not see sweeping changes in the way literacy education is carried out. As long as the demands of funders are for performance standards and competencies, as long as the funders define literacy in terms of individual skill gains, it may be difficult for a program to break the mold.

Professionalism vs. Paraprofessionalism

Another significant barrier may be that literacy teachers themselves may have limited knowledge and involvement in their communities. The increasing interest in "professionalism" among literacy teachers, while understandable and commendable, may also create additional distance between themselves and their students. Many of the community groups we work with employ "paraprofessional" staff, who are not certified teachers, who may themselves be graduates of the literacy program. For both paraprofessionals and professionals,

little training is available to help them develop community-oriented approaches to their work. And there are few models in this country to show what community-oriented literacy would look like.

The Community in the Classroom project which we have been developing with ten Appalachian community based groups seeks to explore ways to overcome the barriers, to learn together and support each other as we do something we know is difficult, and to create models to show a kind of literacy that respects and values our culture and builds our communities.

COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

The Appalachian groups with whom we are working, including the three described in the paper entitled "Appalachian Communities: Working to Survive," are strong and effective groups. However, although their education work is "in" the community, it is not always directly connected to building the community. Most of the groups have been constrained to some extent by the methods which are dominant in adult education. The understanding which the groups have developed about how people learn and change are not always easily applied to the literacy work they do. The groups also have a wide range of experience in literacy education, from many years to a new start.

Whitley County Communities for Children, Williamsburg, Kentucky puts family and literacy work together in inter-generational approaches to education. They have run basic skills education programs for several years, along with parenting, children and youth programs.

For these groups, literacy connects with community issues in a variety of ways. In Dayhoit, Kentucky, for example, *Concerned Citizens Against Toxic Waste* has been working for the past two years to stop well water pollution from a nearby industrial site. As they have tried to organize their community, group members have found many people who lack the basic literacy skills to gain information about the environmental problem, and to be active in attempts to clean it up. *St. Charles Community Center* has offered literacy tutoring and basic adult education classes for several years. But as they open a new community-owned sewing factory they have discovered a need for a workers' education program which includes the history of the factory and analysis of the responsibilities of the board, management, and workers as well as instruction in reading and writing.

Such community-based approaches to education are very different from the traditional. These groups are saying that our communities need educated people who will stay, in order to develop the economic, social and political life of those communities. They see education as an investment in human capital which will pay dividends for their communities. In order to start local businesses, to create jobs, to market craft products, to staff a day care centre, people need better education. Education for them is not the "ticket out", but the "ticket

in" — to develop the community and to develop leaders who care about their community and will work to resolve its problems.

Identifying the Key Needs

The challenge for our Community in the Classroom project is to help the community groups develop education to meet community needs. Each group has a different focus and approach. Each shares a common interest in developing their community, in participatory and community-based education. In order to revitalize their communities, they want to integrate education with community development activities. The groups identified key needs which gave rise to the Community in the Classroom project:

- **leadership development and training** for community-based tutors and teachers, especially in participatory education;
- **designing curriculum that incorporates real issues** confronting their communities, as themes for discussion, reading and writing;
- **channels for literacy students to contribute to their communities**, and for their concerns and issues to be connected with the organization's work; developing sensitivity in community-based organizations to the potential barriers to people with low literacy skills becoming closely involved;
- networking and support to strengthen community-based organizations with common concerns and similar programs.

The year-long project is now well underway. Three kinds of activities are taking place during the project year:

1. a series of **six workshops**, collaboratively planned and facilitated, which build knowledge, skills and leadership abilities of participants who are staff and volunteers in the groups;
2. a series of **special projects** developed by each community group to focus on a particular need of their organization;
3. a process of **program reflection** and development, designed to integrate literacy education with other community empowerment activities, and to address barriers to participation by adults with low literacy.

WORKSHOPS

Center for Literacy Studies staff and participants plan each workshop together, using : a variety of participatory activities that help people draw on their own experiences, opportunities to try things out, a chance to think critically and solve problems around community issues and linking them with literacy.

The first workshop was a time to get acquainted, talk about our organizations, our lives and the things that matter to us as individuals and groups; and the ways in which participating groups see adult education in their community work. Participants chose topics for the next five workshops: community participation, community-based teaching, building leadership, producing our own materials, and teaching methods.

One recent workshop gives a flavour of the experiences. The topic was *community-based teaching*. The morning began with participants introducing themselves and telling some challenge or celebration from their lives or work, or sharing a new teaching idea they had tried. After introducing the topic, the facilitator asked group members where each obtained water. (We knew that water is an active issue in several of the communities, and is of concern to all of us.) Those answers were recorded on newsprint, and the facilitator asked some other questions about what problems participants had with water, what they had tried to do about it, and what the results were. All of this was also recorded.

We then broke into small groups, depending on the student skill level participants usually worked with. The task for each group was to think about how to use this discussion with their students. Group members made lists and brought them back to report to the whole group. A wide variety of rich teaching ideas resulted, including:

- making a video tape or taking pictures of water problems;
- learning words associated with water pollution;
- counting number of wells or city water among the class and creating graphs;
- dictating language experience stories about our own water problems to each other;
- role playing a visit with water regulatory officials;
- writing a letter of complaint;
- using water bills to teach math;
- writing a pamphlet about our water rights under the law.

Workshop participants used these teaching ideas to reflect on ways that this approach differs from conventional adult education. Participants commented on the different purposes of education, the differences in the assumed roles of teachers and students, and the hoped-for outcomes of this approach. During all these lively discussions, there was also much information shared about water problems, exchange of strategy ideas, and celebrating of victories that communities have won in organizing on this issue. As in other workshops, one of the challenges was not to lose our focus on literacy methods among all the compelling discussion of community organizing and development.

PROJECTS

Each participating group has chosen a project, an area of focus for their work in their own program for the *Community in the Classroom* year. The projects are very diverse, as one might expect, and incorporate literacy in many different ways.

- *Mountain Women's Exchange* is working toward bringing GED graduates back as volunteers in their adult education program.
- *Dungannon Development Commission* participants are working through a process which they hope will lead to an adult education class for members who are rehabilitating housing and want to learn reading and math skills related to that work.
- *Whitley County Communities for Children* staff are writing a curriculum for JOBS participants, the program for unemployed mothers receiving government aid. The curriculum contains participatory research and other activities that are community-based and provide opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving in groups.
- *Big Creek People in Action* are developing a literacy and adult education program in an isolated part of the county where none has been before.
- *Lonsdale Improvement Organization* members are writing a housing survey and a brochure about their community as a part of the group's neighborhood revitalization and development efforts.

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Some of the groups chose to engage in a process of Board reflection so that even more people from the organization could be involved in thinking through questions related to adult education.

- In Dungannon, Board and committees are holding a series of workshops in which members think through a broader definition of adult education and ways in which adult education can support their existing work.
- Participants from St. Charles hope to facilitate a process for their board to consider the mission of the community-owned sewing factory and the opportunity it can present for workers to be involved with the organization and its adult education classes.

While not all the groups have "boards," and not all those with boards wish to go through a reflection process, all of the participating groups have been and continue to go through a reflection process involving at least those individuals who are active in "Community in the Classroom".

LESSONS LEARNED

At this point, we have learned some lessons (some more than once) and can see more clearly some of the issues involved in using literacy to build communities.

A lot of learning is going on in communities throughout the Appalachian mountains, but sometimes it doesn't look like adult education as we usually conceive it. There are more efforts to link literacy and community development and organizing than we had imagined, although much of it does not fit a conventional image of adult education. One group which has discovered corruption in the local utility district is getting together to teach each other how to read their own water meters to avoid being victimized. This broadened view of literacy pushes back the boundaries of what we've thought of as adult education.

Working together is not always easy. It often takes longer to accomplish group work than we think, for many reasons. Participants are spread across the mountains. Getting together to plan, to have a workshop, to exchange ideas with each other can turn into a major undertaking. Some participants live far from main roads, secondary roads are not good, and driving, especially in winter, can be treacherous.

Lack of personal resources is also a barrier to working together. Even if people live only a few miles apart, if they don't have a car, that distance can still be insurmountable. The closer families are to poverty, the less back-up they have in times of crisis. One illness can totally sap family resources, and there is no time and no money for community work for a while. Even a few dollars for gas to get to a meeting or make a long-distance phone call is out of the question.

People's lives are unpredictable. Jobs must be attended to, families taken care of. Meetings are arranged and then cancelled. Deadlines get moved back. Participants can't commit their organizations to a piece of work, or a certain way of doing things, without discussing it with others. This accountability back to the group must be respected, and it takes time. All these things have a tremendous impact on ability to do work.

Our original intention to plan each workshop cooperatively with members of two participating groups has been much more difficult than we thought because of the logistical problems of bringing people together. A compromise, in which *Center for Literacy Studies* staff travelled first to one community to develop workshop plans, then to another for additional planning and input, finalizing the agenda with telephone calls, simply meant that the "planners" often could not recognize their contribution to the final agenda.

Relationships are critical to the process. Knowing each other as individuals, understanding each other's life situations, learning about each other's children and families, developing trust and an appreciation for each other's work has been vital. It is hard to tell "outsiders" about the problems you are experiencing, and it takes time to trust each other enough to do that.

This has been complicated in the project by the changing participants. It was the original plan that three people from each community would be active from beginning to end, come to all the workshops and spearhead the projects. But people's lives do not fit a plan. Illness, transportation problems, family and work crises have meant that the same people have not been able to come consistently to all the workshops. Time is needed at each workshop to rebuild the "group" feeling.

Changes come slowly, and learning is incremental. None of us hear ideas one time, immediately go back and try them, and integrate the new idea smoothly into our work. Instead, it takes a lot of listening and talking to understand how a particular experience might apply in your own situation. It takes a lot of courage and support to try out some new ways of teaching. It takes a lot of time for the change to feel comfortable. This is especially so because of the next lesson, which we learn over and over again.

The "schooling model" is hard to escape. We have found that even for those of us who want to do adult education in a different way, a way that respects people's culture and knowledge, a way that helps students share power with teachers, a way that builds communities as well as individuals, it is still very hard to do. It is hard to resist the pressure to "cover the material," to be driven by tests, to conform to conventional image of school that learners themselves often come with. To think about education in a different way, we need support, opportunities to try things out and then systematically reflect on them. We need the relationships with others that sustain us.

Tension Between Literacy Goals & Community Development Goals

What is "literacy?" In the communities involved in this project, literacy is only one of many things that the organizations do, and often not the most compelling. Sometimes in workshops and in projects, the "issues" themselves are so urgent, so important and so critical that literacy gets lost. Discussion of educational approaches, linking of community issues to literacy, methodologies and curricula easily get lost in the excitement of sharing organizing strategies, stories of victories and defeats. We have to remind ourselves that when we work with communities, we work with the whole. In the holistic view, we should respond, support and encourage what comes up, from the communities themselves. But that creates tensions for us, for we are a literacy organization, and the project is funded to work on literacy, not just community development.

Regardless of these challenges, the "Community in the Classroom" project has touched an important need and a compelling idea. Participants work on projects at home and gather for workshops. They participate eagerly, and write thoughtful, positive evaluations. They volunteer to host workshops and to help plan and facilitate them. They invite each other to visit programs and communities. They talk about the things they have learned, and what it has meant to them in their own lives and work. They are eager to continue after the project year is over, and determined to stay connected with each other.

The "Community in the Classroom" project demonstrates that literacy is an integral part of community development, and that meeting individuals' literacy needs can be done in a way that also supports and builds their involvement in community issues. We may not have all the answers about how it all works, and what should be done, but we are all clear that it can be done. The project confirms the ideas that participants held: that literacy can build communities.

We live in a world of limited resources. But we also know that many things can happen because enough people care about them, and can see where they are headed. We can think about and design literacy education in a different way. If we want education to be the "ticket in" rather than the "ticket out" for rural communities, then we *must* make education an integral part of community development rather than simply preparing people for their place in "business as

usual." If we believe that it is not enough to educate people to compete for the same limited number of not-very-good jobs, then we *must* pay attention to what else education can do for our society. If we believe that diverse peoples can learn to live together, accept each other and work together toward common goals, then we *must* create opportunities for people to learn about each other, share common experiences and recognize commonalities as well as differences. If we want to hold on to our rural roots, then we *must* focus attention on building and rebuilding communities.

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